



# U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

<b>PART</b>  224 FW 3-6	<b>SUBJECT</b>  Personnel Service Awards and Recognition Program Monetary Awards Nonmonetary Awards & Informal Honors Honor Awards	<b>RELEASE NUMBER</b>  384
<b>FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT</b> Division of Human Resources		<b>DATE</b>  December 27, 2001

## EXPLANATION OF MATERIAL TRANSMITTED:

These chapters are revised to mandate the use of FWS Form 3-2207 (Award Certification) for processing all awards.

  
Acting ASSISTANT DIRECTOR - BUDGET,  
PLANNING AND HUMAN RESOURCES

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## FILING INSTRUCTIONS:

### Remove:

224 FW 3, FWM 382, 11/29/01 (2 sheets)  
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224 FW 5, FWM 382, 11/29/01 (1 sheet)  
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**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
PERSONNEL**

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**Part 224 Performance and Utilization**

**Chapter 5 Nonmonetary Recognition and Informal Honors**

**224 FW 5**

**5.1 What is the Nonmonetary Recognition and Informal Honors Program?** The Nonmonetary Recognition and Informal Honors Program recognizes contributions to the Service by employees and partners-in-mission. Accomplishments may include: superior accomplishment of regularly assigned duties, exceptional achievement of project goals, noteworthy accomplishments over a sustained period, or specific contributions to the Service mission.

**5.2 What are nonmonetary recognition awards?**

**A.** Nonmonetary recognition awards include such items as: plaques, key chains, paperweights, ball caps, tickets to events, coffee cups, brief cases, or other appropriate items. When possible, these items should contain the Service or the Department name, logo, title, or mission. Supervisors must exercise judgment in granting nonmonetary awards to avoid any possibility of embarrassment to the Service.

**B.** Nonmonetary recognition awards should be of nominal value, so that the employee does not incur a tax liability. Nominal value is defined as any item valued less than \$50.

**C.** You may award items of significant value, \$50 or more, but appropriate tax withholdings from the employee's gross wages must be made. Additionally, multiple items should not be awarded on a frequent basis to any individual, as their combined value could also create a tax liability.

**D.** Awards granted for safety achievements are not taxable until they exceed \$400 in value.

**E.** Items having a redeemable cash value, such as a gift certificate, are taxable at any value.

**5.3 How do I nominate someone for a nonmonetary recognition award?** Nominating officials must complete FWS Form 3-2207 (Award Certification) for all nonmonetary awards nominations. The approval authorities are the same as those for monetary awards (see paragraph 3.9, 224 FW 3).

**5.4 What are informal honors?** Informal honors include: letters of commendation, certificates, thank you notes, or other similar items and may be granted at any level.

**5.5 What is a time-off award?** A time-off award is an excused absence granted to an employee without charge to leave or loss of pay, as a means of recognition of a personal effort that contributes to the quality, efficiency, or economy of Government operations.

**A. What is the authority for granting time-off awards?** The Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990 (FEPCA), Public Law 101-509, provides Federal agencies authority to grant employees time off from duty as an

incentive award under 5 U.S.C. 4502(e), General provisions. The Office of Personnel Management has provided regulations under 5 CFR 451.

**B. Who is eligible for a time-off award?** You may grant a time-off award to any Service employee except employees on intermittent work schedules and members of the Senior Executive Service.

**C. What is the purpose of the time-off award?** Time-off awards are intended to increase Federal employees' productivity and creativity by rewarding their contributions to the quality, efficiency, or economy of Government operations.

**D. What is the policy for time-off awards?** We encourage managers and supervisors to utilize innovative ways to recognize employees' creativity and productivity through the incentive awards program, and support time-off awards for this purpose. The granting of time-off is an exercise of management discretion excluded from the administrative grievance procedure.

**E. What criteria apply to time-off awards?** Nominees must demonstrate a high quality accomplishment(s) that contribute(s) to the quality, efficiency, or economy of Government operations. The following are some examples of high quality accomplishments; these examples are not all inclusive:

(1) Making a contribution that exceeds normal expectations and involves a difficult or important project or assignment.

(2) Displaying special initiative and skill in completing an assignment or project before the deadline.

(3) Using initiative and creativity in making improvements in a product, activity, program, or service.

(4) Ensuring the mission of the organization is accomplished during a difficult period by successfully completing additional work or a project assignment while sustaining the normal, everyday workload.

**F. In what amounts can I grant time-off awards?** The minimum time-off award is 1 hour.

(1) **Full-Time Employees.** No more than 40 hours may be granted for a single award, and no more than 80 hours may be granted in any given leave year.

(2) **Part-Time Employees.** No more than one-half the average number of hours of work in the employee's biweekly scheduled tour of duty may be granted for a single award. No more than the average number of hours of work in the employee's biweekly scheduled tour of duty may be granted for the leave year.

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**G. How are time-off awards approved?** The immediate supervisor prepares a brief, written statement on FWS Form 3-2207 that clearly describes the contribution or accomplishments made by the employee. The immediate supervisor should determine the number of hours to be granted for a time-off award by considering the benefits realized by the Government in terms of the value of the contribution and the extent of application and/or impact of the employee's contribution. Refer the award nomination to the next higher level official (reviewing official) for review and approval. Both the immediate supervisor and the reviewing official will sign the form.

**H. How do time-off awards relate to other recognition?** Time-off awards are another form of recognition to encourage and recognize exceptional employees for contributions that benefit the Government. They do not replace existing cash or honor awards. Time-off awards are for specific accomplishments that are generally of a one-time, nonrecurring nature. Do not use time-off awards to recognize continuing high-level performance. You may use time-off awards in conjunction with monetary awards when the employee's contribution warrants the combination of awards.

**I. How are time-off awards related to leave?** Time-off awards are an employee incentive rather than a category of leave. You cannot convert time-off awards to a cash payment under any circumstance; therefore, they cannot be converted like accrued annual leave to a cash payment upon separation from the Federal service. Time-off awards cannot be transferred when the employee transfers to another Federal agency. However, the time-off award may be transferred to another Interior bureau because of an unusual circumstance; e.g., the employee was unable to use the award and the new supervisor agrees to allow the employee to use the award in the new position.

**J. How are time-off awards processed?** After approval, forward the original FWS Form 3-2207 to the employee's servicing personnel office for processing, and present a copy to the employee in an appropriate manner. The immediate supervisor retains a third copy.

**K. How are time-off awards recorded for time and attendance purposes?** When the employee takes the time-off award, the timekeeper uses Hours Code 30C and inserts the number of daily hours used and the weekly totals to complete the employee's regular schedule.

**L. When are time-off awards used?**

(1) The immediate supervisor has the authority to schedule the use of the time-off award so that the organizational workload is considered and productivity is sustained. Therefore, the employee and the immediate supervisor will agree on the use of the time-off award.

(2) Time-off awards must be used within 1-year after the effective date of the award. Employees should be informed of the 1-year limitation on use at the time the award is presented. Awards not used within 1-year will expire.

(3) Time-off awards should be scheduled and used so as not to adversely affect an employee who is in an annual leave "use or lose" situation. In addition, if the employee becomes physically incapacitated during the use of the time-off award, the immediate supervisor may grant sick leave for the period of incapacitation and reschedule the use of the award.

(4) Time-off awards need not be taken in the increments in which they are granted; e.g., for an employee who works a normal 40-hour workweek, an award of 5 workdays may be taken consecutively or 1 day at a time, subject to supervisory approval.

**5.6 What is the Career Service Recognition Program?**

We will award Length-of-Service emblems and certificates to Service employees who have completed 10, 20, 30, 40, and 50 years of Government service. We will not issue certificates or emblems for any other number of years of service. The employee's service computation date is used to determine eligibility. It is the responsibility of each servicing personnel office to ensure that an appropriate length of service certificate and emblem are issued to the supervisor of each individual eligible for such recognition. Certificates for 10 and 20 years of service will be signed by the appropriate Deputy, Regional, or Assistant Director, and those for 30, 40, and 50 years, as well as all certificates for SES members, will be prepared for the signature of the Director. The date to be used on all Length-of-Service Certificates is the day and month of the employee's service computation date and the year in which the anniversary takes place.

**5.7 What type of recognition is granted to employees at retirement?**

Consideration of an appropriate form of retirement recognition is a normal and inherent responsibility of supervisors and managers, since they are the individuals in the best position to know the value of an employee's service to the organization. Upon notification by a supervisor of the impending retirement of an employee, the servicing personnel office will prepare a retirement certificate for the signature of the Director. Regional personnel offices will forward the prepared certificate to the Correspondence Control Unit (CCU) for signature by the Director. CCU will return the signed certificate to the servicing personnel office. The servicing personnel office will forward the signed certificate and a retirement pin to the supervisor for presentation to the employee. The manner in which the certificate and pin are presented is at the discretion of the retiree's supervisor.